



File Code: 1950

Date: October 24, 2012

The Cherokee National Forest is proposing the Stoney Creek Project to work toward the desired conditions for the project area, as directed in the Cherokee National Forest's *Revised Land and Resource Management Plan* (RLRMP). We request your comments on the proposed action in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act.

The RLRMP identifies goals and objectives to be implemented under various management prescriptions. There are 10 management prescription areas, comprising approximately 29,092 acres of National Forest System lands within the proposed Stoney Creek Project area. The approximately 113 acres unclassified to prescription area brings the total National Forest System lands in the project area to 29,205 acres (Table 1).

Table 1: Prescription Areas in Stoney Creek Project area

Prescription	Description	Acres*
1.A	Designated Wilderness (Big Laurel Branch)	4,391
1.B	Recommended Wilderness Study Area (Big Laurel Branch Addition)	2,808
4.A	Appalachian Trail Corridor	1,467
4.F	Scenic Areas	2,594
5.A	Administrative Sites	2
5.B	Electronic Sites	302
7.E.2	Dispersed Recreation Areas-Suitable	11,272
9.F	Rare Communities	119
12.A	Remote Backcountry Recreation – Few Open Roads	2,985
12.B	Remote Backcountry Recreation – Non-motorized	3,152
UNC	Unclassified	113
Total acres		29,205

\* Acres reported in all tables are approximate

Per the RLRMP, the 7.E.2 prescription is considered suitable for timber management. The Prescription totals approximately 11,272 acres, of which 8,299 acres are in Land Class Codes (500s and 600s) suitable for timber production (Table 2). The remaining prescriptions, including the unclassified lands, are considered not suitable for timber management.

Table 2: Acres by Suitable Prescription

Watershed	Prescription	Total Acres	Suitable Acres*	Acres Treated
Stoney Creek	7.E.2	11,272	8,299	383

\* Total acres of stands within the prescription having a suitable land classification.



## 1. Provide early successional habitat

Early successional habitat for wildlife in the Stoney Creek Project area would be created on between 4 and 10% of the suitable acreage in suitable prescriptions. Approximately 351 acres (10 stands) would be regenerated utilizing commercial timber harvest through the shelterwood method (Table 3). One stand—compartment 71, stand 29 (32 acres)—would be regenerated non-commercially. The 383 acres equals approximately 5% of the suitable acreage.

Table 3: Early Successional Habitat Treatment Areas

Prescription	Compartment	Stand	Acres	Age*	Forest Type
7.E.2	66	40	39	132	White oak - No. red oak - Hickory
7.E.2	67	2	30	28	White oak - No. red oak - Hickory
7.E.2	67	7	10	97	Cove hardwood - White pine - Hemlock
7.E.2	67	18	40	95	White oak - No. red oak - Hickory
7.E.2	68	5	40	162	Chestnut oak - Scarlet oak
7.E.2	68	30	39	162	Chestnut oak - Scarlet oak
7.E.2	71	1	37	107	White oak - No. red oak - Hickory
7.E.2	71	8	36	87	White oak - No. red oak - Hickory
7.E.2	71	29	32	110	White oak - No. red oak - Hickory
7.E.2	72	15	40	100	Northern red oak
7.E.2	73	17	40	93	Chestnut oak - Scarlet oak
<b>Total acres</b>			<b>383</b>		

*\* Age for all tables was calculated using 2012 as the base year*

All stands in Table 3 would require pre- and post-harvest site preparation and release treatments:

- Pre-harvest site preparation: Prior to harvest, midstory species would be controlled with an herbicide (Imazapyr and Glyphosate) to reduce post-harvest sprouting of overly-competitive species.
- Mast tree seedling plantings: Seedlings of mast-producing tree species would be planted, where needed in regenerated areas to augment natural reproduction.
- Post-harvest treatments: One-two years after harvest, use mechanical (e.g. chainsaw slashdown) or herbicide treatments (Imazapyr and Glyphosate), and two-four years after harvest, use herbicide treatments (Triclopyr) to reduce overly-competitive sprouts. At about age 10, use chainsaws to provide for release of mast-producing trees.

## 2. Crop Tree Release

Use mechanical treatment methods (e.g. chainsaw) on approximately 13 acres (two stands) to select and provide for the release of mast-producing trees (Table 4).

Table 4: Crop Tree Release Acres

Compartment	Stand	Acres
69	25	4
69	28	9
<b>Total Acres</b>		<b>13</b>

### 3. Maintain and create temporary roads

Approximately 6.3 miles of existing road would be maintained, and approximately 1.5 miles of temporary road would be constructed in support of timber sale activities (Table 5). All temporary roads would be closed after the timber sale.

Table 5: Maintained and Temporary Roads

<b>Road #</b>	<b>Road Name</b>	<b>Miles</b>	<b>Action</b>
316	Bartee Branch	0.60	Pre-Haul Maintenance
316A	Sam's Cove	1.01	Pre-Haul Maintenance
5081	Griffith Branch	4.24	Pre-Haul Maintenance
60682	Furnace Branch	0.47	Pre-Haul Maintenance
<b>Total miles</b>		<b>6.32</b>	
Temporary Road in Comp 66, Stand 40		0.28	Temporary Construction
Temporary Road in Comp 68, Stand 5		0.63	Temporary Construction
Temporary Road in Comp 71, Stand 8		0.23	Temporary Construction
Temporary Road in Comp 72, Stand 15		0.35	Temporary Construction
<b>Total miles</b>		<b>1.49</b>	

### 4. Improve Wildlife Habitat

The following actions and anticipated year of implementation (e.g. Year 1) are proposed to improve habitat conditions for terrestrial wildlife (Table 6):

- Boxes – place bat roost boxes and bird/small mammal nest boxes (Years 2-3).
- Water – construct waterholes, vernal ponds, or wetlands (~ 1/8<sup>th</sup> acre) (Years 2-3).
- Logs – provide ruffed grouse drumming logs (Years 3-4).

Table 6: Terrestrial Wildlife Activities

<b>Location</b>	<b>Boxes (each)</b>	<b>Water (feature)</b>	<b>Logs (each)</b>
Compartment 66	4	0	10
Compartment 67	4	1	10
Compartment 68	2	0	5
Compartment 71	4	1	10
Compartment 72	2	0	5
Compartment 73	2	0	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>45</b>

### 5. Roads to be authorized

Approximately 8.2 miles of roads would be authorized, per recommendations provided in the Stoney Creek Travel Analysis Plan (Table 7). All but 0.5 miles of the total is to account for powerline access already on the ground: OR-7 and OR-8 are not associated with powerline access.

Table 7: Roads to be Authorized

Road #	Proposed FSR Road Name	Proposed FSR#	Miles
OR-1	Horselog Branch	60601	0.47
OR-2	Grindstaff Branch Extension	6059	0.27
OR-3	Grindstaff Branch Spur B	6059B	0.28
OR-4	Elliott Hollow Extension	60591	2.46
OR-5	Hurley Branch	60581	2.78
OR-6	Miller Branch Special Use	60701	0.02
OR-7	Hinkle Branch Spur A	60681A	0.39
OR-8	Blue Hole	60721	0.11
OR-9	Fork Ridge	60722	1.27
OR-10	Edwards Tract	60552	0.12
<b>Total Miles</b>			<b>8.17</b>

Responding to Scoping

Responses, including names and addresses, received will be used in the Environmental Analysis process, and will be considered part of the public record for the Stoney Creek Project. Comments must be postmarked or received within 30 days beginning the day after publication of the legal notice in the *Johnson City Press*. Written comments should be sent to:

Don Palmer  
Cherokee National Forest  
Watauga Ranger District  
4400 Unicoi Drive  
Unicoi, TN 37692

Office: (423) 735-1500  
FAX: (423) 735-7306

Oral or hand-delivered comments must be received within our normal business hours of 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. Comments may also be mailed electronically to: [comments-southern-cherokee-watauga@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-southern-cherokee-watauga@fs.fed.us). Please identify "Stoney Creek Project" in the subject line.

Additional information may be obtained from Jeff Chynoweth at Cherokee National Forest, Unaka Ranger District, 4900 Asheville Hwy, Greeneville, TN 37743 or by phone: (423) 638-4109 or Fax: (423) 638-6599. All comments will be available for public inspection.

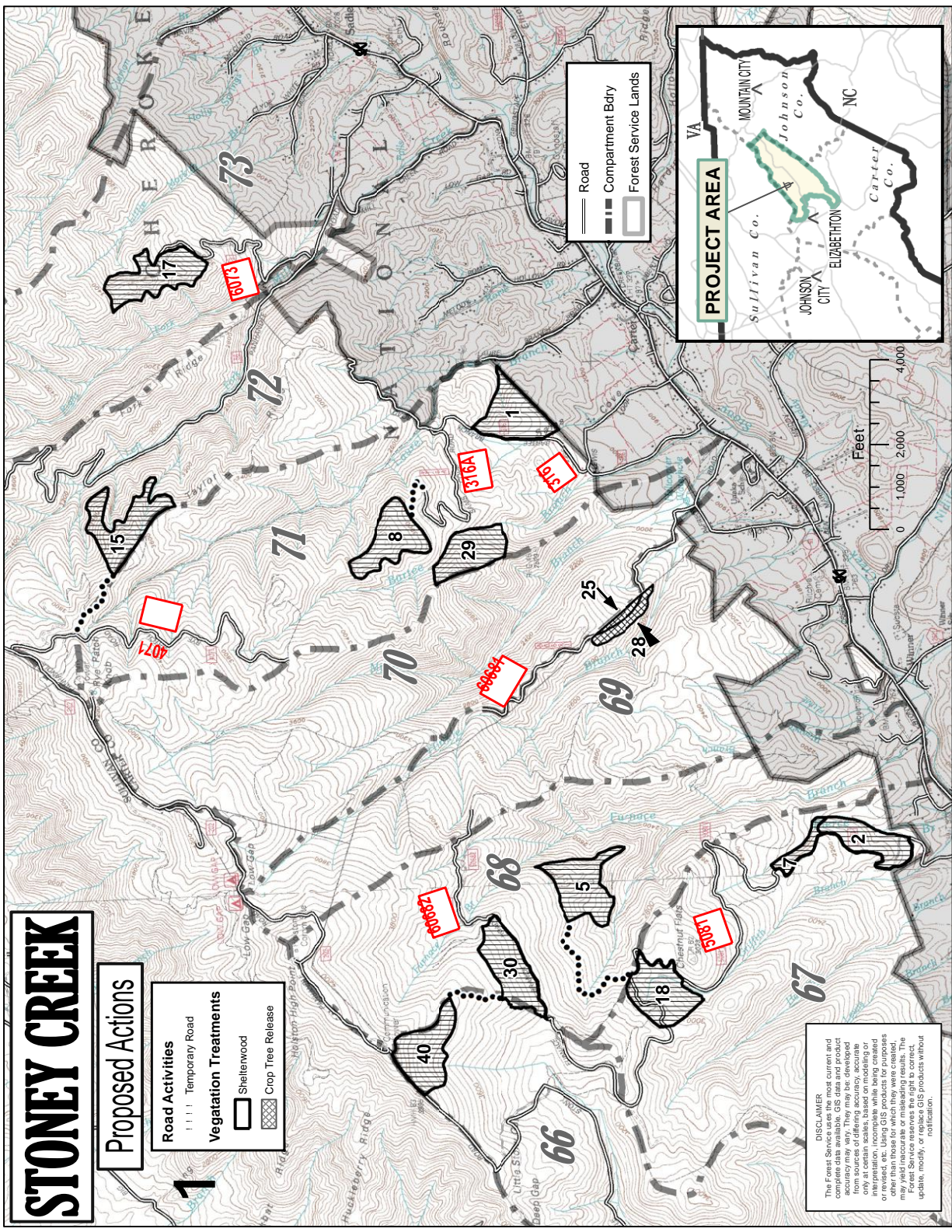
/s/ Don J. Palmer

Don J. Palmer  
District Ranger

Attachments (2): Stoney Creek Project: Proposed Vegetation Treatment Map  
Stoney Creek Project: Proposed Road Authorizations Map



Stoney Creek Project: Proposed Vegetation Treatments Map





# Stoney Creek Project: Proposed Road Authorizations Map

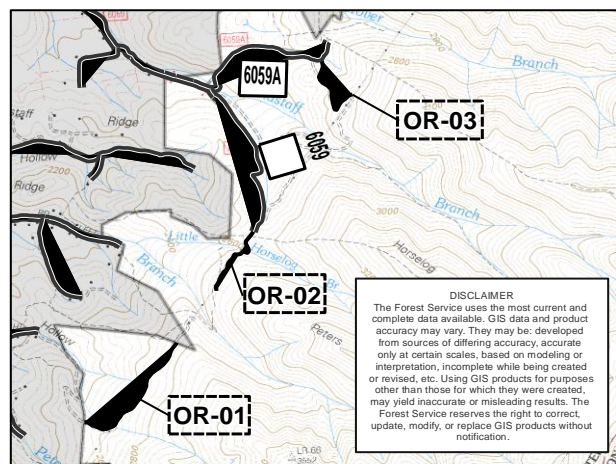
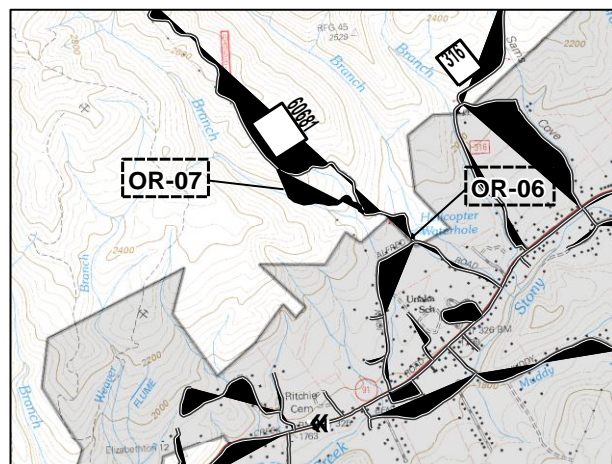
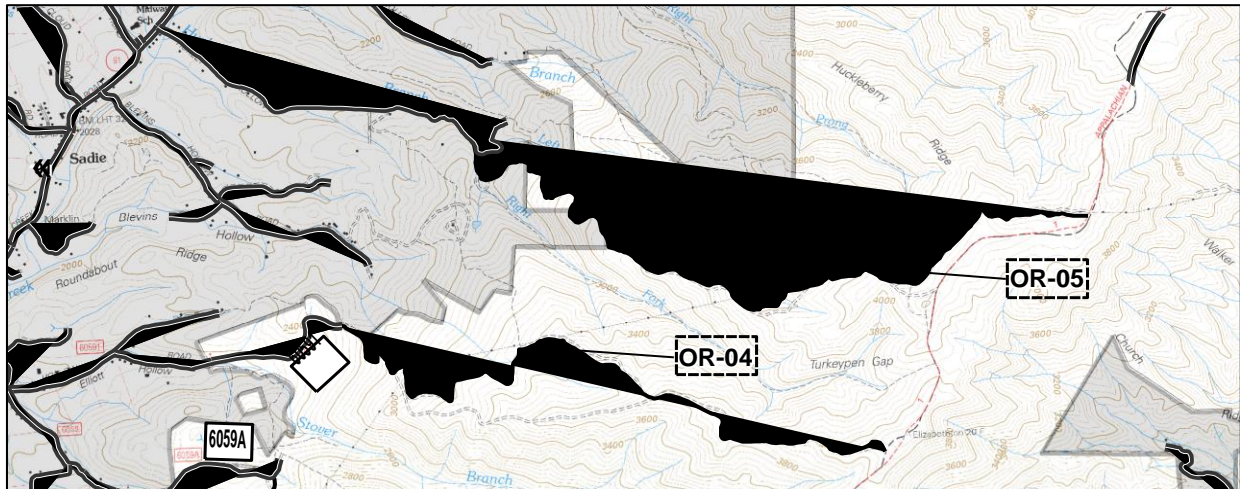
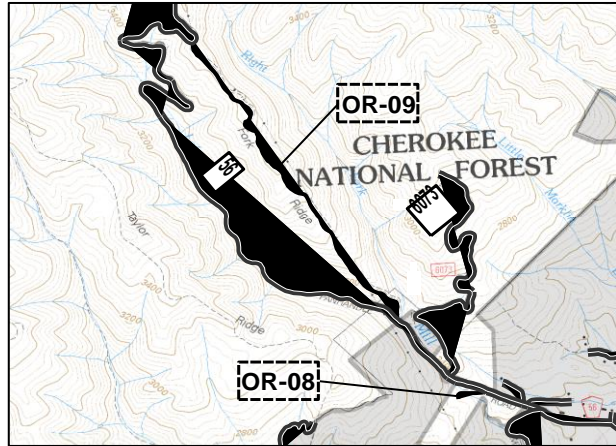
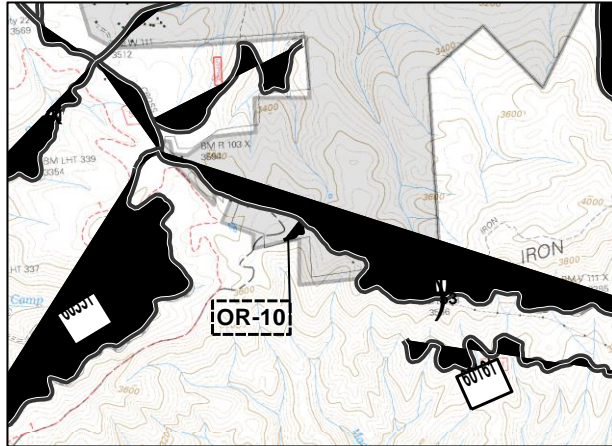
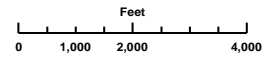
## 1 STONEY CREEK - Proposed Road Authorizations

— Old Road

— Road

Forest Service Land

[OR-XX] = Road to Authorize



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